

**1998**  
**Confederated Tribes Of The Siletz Indians of Oregon**  
**Unified Watershed Assessment**  
**And**  
**Watershed Restoration Priorities**

**Introduction**

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (CTSI) has chosen to become involved in the Clean Water Action Plan (Feb. 1998) Unified Watershed Assessments. The CTSI have been involved with clean water issues in basins of tribal interest during the past several decades. More recently the CTSI have become involved with the EPA through the 106 and GAP programs. The Tribe believes the current Clean Water Action Plan and the other EPA programs it is involved with build upon one another and wish to continue the sequence of activities the federal government is currently providing to assist in watershed restoration nationwide.

The purpose of this assessment is to: (1) categorize watersheds containing reservation and tribal fee lands and certain tribal usual and accustomed fishing and gathering places; (2) set out priorities for restoration and guide the development of restoration strategies of these watersheds pursuant to the Clean Water Action Plan; (3) serve to steer the use of new resources made available through the President's FY 1999 Clean Water and Water Restoration Budget Initiative to accelerate watershed restoration in a coordinated manner to achieve maximum effect; (4) assist in the cooperation of efforts between state and federal entities toward the goal of watershed restoration and protection.

**INFORMATION USED FOR CATEGORIZATION AND  
PRIORITIZATION DECISIONS**

Decisions for categorizations and prioritization of watersheds included, but were not limited to, the following:

1. EPA's 1994 303(d) list for the State of Oregon.
2. Oregon's draft 1998 303(d) list.
3. State of Oregon's Dept. Fish/Wildlife Aquatic Habitat Inventories Archives
4. Georgia Pacific, The Timber Company's Aquatic Habitat Inventories Archives
5. State of Oregon's Dept. Fish/Wildlife, Siletz River Basin Management Plan 1997
6. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Cooperative Estuary Project Report, 1998
7. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Inventories of fishes and habitats of the Siletz River Basin, 1998.

8. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Inventories of instream flows in the Siletz River, 1998.
9. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Inventories of Siletz River Basin landslides related to landuse and flooding, 1998.
10. USFWS estuary refuge management inventories (Siletz River Basin) 1998.
11. BLM Upper Watershed Analysis, 1996.

## DESCRIPTION OF CATEGORIES USED FOR THIS ASSESSMENT

**Category I Watersheds In Need of Restoration.** These watersheds do not now meet, or face imminent threat of not meeting, clean water and other natural resource goals. Selection factors include-

- Presence of watersheds within a watershed on a 303(d) list promulgated by any state, tribe, or the EPA (including pursuant to court order).
- Reservation watersheds listed as high priority by the Natural Res. Dept. Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.
- Watersheds containing populations of anadromous or resident fish listed by the state of Oregon or NMFS as a concern, threatened or endangered species.
- Watersheds containing critical habitats for the above such listed species.
- Watersheds containing stream reaches described as impaired or degraded in a biological or physical inventory within, adjacent to having an influence on Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians lands.

**Category II Watersheds Meeting Goals, Including Those Needing Actions to Sustain Water Quality.** These watersheds meet clean water and other natural resource goals and standards and support healthy aquatic systems. All such watersheds need the continuing implementation of base clean water and natural resource programs to maintain water quality and conserve natural resources.

**Category III Watersheds with Pristine or Sensitive Aquatic System Conditions.** These watersheds have exceptionally pristine water quality, drinking water sources, or other sensitive aquatic system conditions.

**Category IV Watersheds with Insufficient Data Too Make An Assessment.** These watersheds lack data, critical data elements, or the data density needed to make a reasonable assessment.

## BASIS FOR PRIORITIZATION OF CATEGORY I WATERSHEDS

Prioritization of watersheds for restoration was made by considering the selection factors for Category I listing and considering other regional tribal, private, state and federal issues and ownership. The Siletz River Basin historically had some of the largest and most diverse anadromous fisheries in the central coast region. The Siletz Tribe has

great concerns regarding declines in aquatic habitats and a broad range of aquatic organisms in the Siletz River basin. The majority of reservation lands exist in the Siletz River Basin. This watershed is where the majority of the tribal members exercise their treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather. The State of Oregon (ODFW) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) have both recognized the Siletz Basin as a heavily degraded but yet a currently significant refuge for several species which have declined during the past 20 years. There exists very little federal and no state property in the Siletz Basin. The high rate of private ownership has resulted in less protection of the limited natural resources in the basin. This is yet another reason for categorizing the Siletz Basin as a Category I watershed.

Prioritization is described as follows:

**High:** High priority watersheds are Category I watersheds in need of immediate restoration actions (within next two years).

**Medium:** Medium priority watersheds are Category I watersheds in need of restoration actions within the next 5 years.

**Low:** Low priority watersheds are Category I watersheds in need of restoration efforts which could occur beyond 5 years or require restoration of other watersheds (listed as high or medium) to be meaningful or effective.

CATEGORIZATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF WATERSHEDS OF  
THE 1) RESERVATION, 2) TRIBAL FEE LANDS, AND 3)  
CONTAINING USUAL AND ACCUSTOMED FISHING AND  
GATHERING AREAS.

**Introduction**

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians (CTSI) includes 3600 members located throughout Siletz River basin. The lands of the Siletz Indians are located in the Siletz watershed on the central coast of Oregon.

The Siletz River extends 93 km inland before branching into a north and south fork of approximately 20 km in length each. Total drainage area is 523 km<sup>2</sup>. Tidal action is present up to Rkm 35. The gradient is fairly flat below Rkm 85 meandering through agricultural land. Above Rkm 85 the gradient increases. Agriculture and timber management are primary activities and most upslope lands are dominated by clear cuts and second growth timber. Lowlands are mainly used as pastures. Historical stream flows show ranges of 50-100 cfs for low summer flows and 20-30 thousand cfs for peak winter flows.

Native fish species of interest include fall and winter chinook, coho, chum, and sockeye salmon, summer and winter steelhead trout, cutthroat trout, Pacific and brook lamprey and various cottids.

*Tribal members have exercised treaty rights through fishing, hunting and gathering native foods for cultural purposes specifically in the Siletz River basin and adjacent watersheds ( Yaquina and Alsea) since 1855. Fish, native plant harvests and diversity of wildlife have dramatically declined during the past two decades while commercial timber harvests and urban growth have increased. During the same time anecdotal evidence points to increased surface water quality degradation and loss of a range of historically available aquatic habitats.*

#### **Classification**

Watershed Name	Watershed Type	HUC#	Category	Priority
Siletz	1,2,3	17100204	1	High
Yaquina	1,2,3	17100204	1	High
Alsea	3	17100205	1	High

#### **PARTICIPANTS IN DEVELOPMENT OF UNIFIED WATERSHED ASSESSMENT**

The Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians have developed this Unified Watershed Assessment with a host of other interested parties. These include but are not limited to: State of Oregon, Dept. Fish and Wildlife, US Fish and Wildlife, Western Oregon Refuges, US Fish and Wildlife (Region Office), MidCoast Watersheds Council, Siletz River Watersheds Basin Team, State of Oregon Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, Federal Bureau of Land Management, Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District, and Georgia Pacific (The Timber Company). The above was accomplished through a series of meetings during a two year period (1997-1998). No department or agency from the State of Oregon made an attempt to involve CTSI in State Unified Watershed Assessments completed during this same time period.